

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 10, 2006

Norman Y. Mineta
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street, SW, S-1
Washington, DC 20590

Secretary Mineta:

We are writing to express our support for the Trans-Hudson Express (THE) Tunnel Project. This project includes construction of a new rail tunnel beneath the Hudson River and connecting our two states, as well as a major new rail terminal in midtown Manhattan.

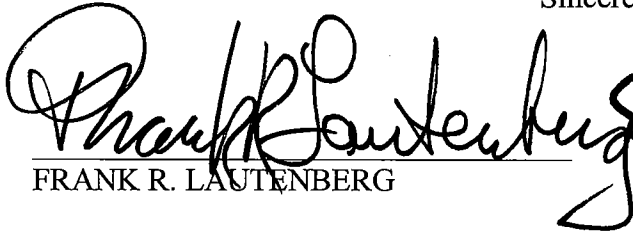
Our current transportation infrastructure will soon be unable to accommodate passenger rail demand for crossing the Hudson River. In the last twenty years, commuter rail service from areas west of the Hudson River has doubled to over 140,000 daily trips. This service currently relies on the Northeast Corridor Rail Line, which, as you know, narrows down to a 100-year-old, two-track tunnel under the Hudson River.

The New York/New Jersey region has been a driving force in the American economy and much of our success has relied on the mobility provided for our residents, commuters, and visiting tourists. Over the past 20 years, population and economic development in the region have reached new heights. Today, over 17 million people live in the bi-state region, and according to recent forecasts, housing and population are forecast to grow by more than one million people west of the Hudson River in the next 20 years. Without timely completion of THE Tunnel, our region's economic health will be at risk. Traffic congestion will slow the region to a halt and our economy will be literally choked.

Two months ago, the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council unanimously voted to endorse THE Tunnel as a "priority project" for the region. This latest endorsement, combined with the declarations of support from Governor Corzine, Governor Pataki, Mayor Bloomberg, and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, indicate a regional consensus to solve an urgent regional problem. We, the four senators representing this bi-state region, are united in support of THE Tunnel.

We look forward to the timely completion of the environmental and cost-benefit reviews for the project, and ask that you please keep our offices informed about progress on this critical regional initiative. Thank your for your leadership and continued assistance.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG


ROBERT MENENDEZ


HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON


CHARLES SCHUMER